

## ***197<sup>th</sup> Field Artillery Brigade Undergoes Change-of-Command***

By Pfc. Kathleen Briere 114<sup>th</sup> MPAD

MANCHESTER, N.H.--The commander for the Rear Area Operation Center in Iraq, for the past fifteen months, took command of the 197<sup>th</sup> Field Artillery Brigade April 7th at 2:30 p.m. in a change-of-command ceremony at the Manchester armory, Manchester, N.H.

Col. David B. Mercieri assumed the position of brigade commander from Col. Daniel R. Lavertue. Lavertue will become the operations manager for the Joint Force Headquarters in Concord, N.H.

A service member for 35 years, Lavertue said, "It's tough to leave. With a battery, you're right there with the troops everyday... I joke with the other commanders and tell them all, 'if you don't leave your company kicking and screaming, you haven't done your job'. It was painful to pass the guidon, but I know I'm passing it to a capable commander... This *is* the best job in the world."

Mercieri said he has dreamt about being the brigade commander of the 197<sup>th</sup> FA BDE for many years. He has already served in many of its capacities, including the 3<sup>rd</sup> Battalion Aerial Observer Officer, the battery Fire Direction Officer, Battalion Chemical Officer, Battalion Fire Direction Officer, Battery Executive Officer, and Battery Commander. He served as the 1<sup>st</sup> Battalion 172<sup>nd</sup> Field Artillery Fire Direction Officer, and in the 197<sup>th</sup> Field Artillery Brigade as the Fire Control Officer, Assistant Operations Officer and the Operation Officer.

After the ceremony, with a smile on his face, Mercieri said, “Taking the guidon ... that felt fantastic”.



COL Mercieri Takes 197<sup>th</sup> Field Artillery Guidon

He earned his Bachelor of General Studies and his master’s degree in public administration. He is a graduate of the Field Artillery Officer Basic Course, the Field Artillery Officer Advanced Course, and the Army Command and General Staff College.

During his 28 years of service, Mercieri has earned the Bronze Star Medal, the Meritorious Service Medal with two oak-leaf clusters, the Army Commendation Medal with one oak-leaf cluster, the Army Achievement Medal with one oak-leaf cluster, the Air Force Good Conduct Medal, the Army Reserve Components Achievement Medal with silver oak leaf cluster, the National Defense Service Medal with two bronze star devices, the Iraq Campaign Medal, the Global War on Terrorism Service Medal, the Armed Forces Reserve Medal with hour glass and “M” device, the Army Service Ribbon, the Air Force Training Ribbon, the Overseas Service Ribbon, the Army Reserve Components Overseas Training Ribbon with Numeral four, and the New Hampshire Army National Guard Service Bar with State Seal. Mercieri has also been inducted into the Honorable Order of Saint Barbara.